

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SCS-06 CA-01 HA-05 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5896
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 20149

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CASC, UR, US
SUBJECT: PLANNED BAR MITZVAH OF AMERICAN BOY IN MOSCOW

REF: STATE 202038 (NOTAL)

1. BAR MITZVAH OF DR. MURRAY KUHR'S SON, MAIMON, TOOK PLACE AT MOSCOW CHORALE SYNAGOGUE AUGUST 19, AS ANTICIPATED REFTTEL, AND WAS ATTENDED BY TWO EMBOFFS. A NUMBER OF OTHER VISITING AMERICANS ATTENDED. THE SERVICE WAS ATTENDED BY THE USUAL SOVIET CONTINGENT OF SABBATH WORKSHIPPERS (ABOUT 250-300 PERSONS). THE REFUSENIK GROUP WHICH MEETS IN FRONT OF THE SYNAGOGUE EVERY SATURDAY AFTERNOON WAS NOT IN EVIDENCE, ALTHOUGH ISSAY GOLDSTEIN (REFUSENIK FROM TBILISI) AND HIS SON DID ATTEND. ANATOLIY SHCHARANSKIY'S BROTHER, LEONID, REPORTEDLY PUT IN A BRIEF APPEARANCE AT THE REAR OF THE SYNAGOGUE, BUT WAS NOT SEEN BY EMBOFFS.

2. RABBI POLLAK HAD DISCUSSED IMPENDING BAR MITZVAH
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CEREMONY DURING EMBASSY CALL ON CONSULAR COUNSELOR AUGUST 17. HE STATED THAT NEITHER SOVIET AUTHORITIES NOR SYNAGOGUE LEADERSHIP HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE PLANNED CEREMONY AND THAT IT WOULD BE ARRANGED ON AD HOC BASIS IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

3. EMBOFFS WHO PARTICIPATED BELIEVE THAT THE EVENT

WAS KEPT SUFFICIENTLY LOW KEY AS NOT TO PRODUCE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FROM SOVIET AUTHORITIES. AT THE SAME TIME, IT HAD AN ELECTRIFYING EFFECT ON CONGREGATION FOR WHOM THIS WAS A CONCRETE MANIFESTATION OF RICHNESS OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THE U.S., A FACT OF WHICH THEY ARE INTELLECTUALLY AWARE BUT HAVE HAD VIRTUALLY NO OPPORTUNITY TO WITNESS FIRST HAND. THE NEWS OF THE BAR MITZVAH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SPREAD THROUGH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND MAY SERVE AS A PRECEDENT FOR WESTERN ATTEMPTS TO INTRODUCE OTHER RITUAL CELEBRATIONS NOT NORMALLY PRACTICED BY JEWISH COMMUNITIES HERE. TOON

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition History: n/a
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